

The Ride Report

A Newsletter for WMSP Instructors



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Upcoming Events

Advisory Board

June 23 in Wenatchee
September 6 in Tri-Cities

2016 WMSP Spring Updates

6-9pm

April 13 in Burlington
April 21 in Wenatchee

2016 2-Wheel IP #1 In Richland

May 13-15
May 20-22
June 3-5
June 10-12

2016 2-Wheel IP #2 TBA

Welcome to the Spring Ride Report!

The days are longer and it's the time of year more motorcycles come out of hibernation. Students are eager to fulfill a dream of learning to ride and purchasing that first motorcycle. New motorcycle models appear on the showroom floor like flowers emerge from the dark days of winter.

Are you ready for the new season? Ready to get back in the classroom and on the range? Are you prepared to advise students on which bike is best for a new rider?

Getting ready for the new season is always fun and one of the things we'll address in this issue of The Ride Report. Helping new students learn



to ride two or three wheels is an adventure, made all the more fun when you ponder your level of fitness to again push bikes, lift bikes and spend hours on your feet. If we encourage students to come prepared, get plenty of rest and drink fluids, what

advice do we give ourselves to ensure a healthy and more comfortable road ahead?

Wherever the road takes you in 2016 may it rise up to meet you as you celebrate another season of coaching!

Where is Your Focus?

Three WSMP instructors own motorcycles as required by the Professional Standards. Each of the bikes is worn and needs replacement. The instructors, Toby, Donna, and Alan, have scheduled service for their bikes. Arriving together, they learn that if the repairs cost more than the value of their bike, he or she gets a new motorcycle and will be back on the road. The other choice is repairing the old bike, which takes about

two weeks.

All three learn that the repairs exceed the value of their bikes. Toby decides to get a new bike and the service manager tells him, "Pick any bike you want." Donna also decides to get a new bike, and the service manager suggests she, "Check out the new models that just arrived." When it's his turn to decide, Alan says: "I guess I'll have mine repaired. The me-

chanics clearly have no work to do."

In this tale, did Alan's concern for the mechanics cloud his judgment to see the bigger picture?

When coaching, do we ever focus on one thing only to miss other important information, like a student's tire has low air pressure?

With experience (and practice) comes a broader focus and a better student experience.

Spring Training

If baseball players and coaches go to spring training to get into shape for the coming season, should motorcycle riding coaches do something similar? Like a baseball coach, you are coaching people to learn and refine their skill. Celebrate that you're using muscle and mental skills similar to those who coach in the big leagues. When we accept that we too coach in the big leagues, we might appreciate we too need a form of "spring training."

A player that sits out spring training and yet thinks he can hit a 95 mph fastball on opening day with the skill used last season is no different than a rider coach thinking I can put a leg over a bike and ride demos when mentally and physically I've been sitting on the couch all winter.

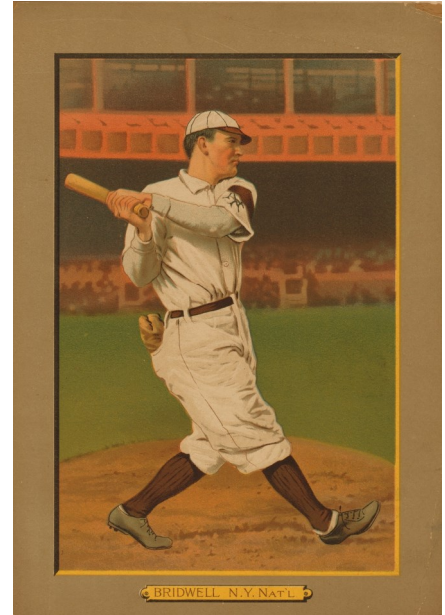
As a coach, what would you do to prepare for teaching a double this weekend? Would it be different if you were C2 for a single IRT? There are many stats that speak to injuries (or worse) while shoveling snow or mowing a lawn (e.g. 80,000 people a year are injured while mowing lawns). Just like riding, these stats speak to conditioning, mental processing, and preparedness. Perceived as less risky than riding, humans have a tendency to take on everyday tasks beyond their physical and mental abilities. Coaches are human and are guilty of overexertion when they require a day or two to recover after a busy weekend of

teaching. Is it reasonable to think that regardless of the number of courses you teach or the frequency, being in shape makes you a better coach?

Search on "prepare yourself for motorcycle riding season" when browsing the web. Common results speak to getting the bike ready with such tips as checking tire pressure, oil level, fresh fuel and condition of the battery. Great advice, but how does it help riders prepare mentally and physically to do something they haven't done in weeks or months? The hard-earned fitness acquired last year can go away within two weeks once stepping away from the range, so let's look at ways to prepare ourselves.

Think about a stretching or exercise program that engages the muscles used while pushing bikes or spending hours on your feet. Put emphasis on the shoulders, arms, legs, and core, as pushing a bike or retrieving cones is a lot different than sitting behind a desk or riding your motorcycle.

The brain benefits too from the exercise, helping to improve your mood, reducing stress and boosts verbal memory and learning. Think about how you get your head into shape before a class, going through the differences between riding and coaching, things to watch for while coaching, and what do if an emergency occurs while coaching.



Start slow and build stamina as you regain confidence and skill in knowing how to respond when five students are riding toward you at once from different directions. Think especially about whether you're ready to pick up bikes or stand and walk most of the day. How much can you lift? How far can you walk?

Think of a routine or habit that helps you remember the basics each and every time you head for class. Take advantage of Instructor Updates, get involved in a QAV, or commit to adding three new ALTs to your repertoire.

Don't look now, but here come the students.

Remind yourself the goal is to enjoy coaching for the love of (insert the reason that motivates you!).

2016 OUTREACH to PROMOTE TRAINING

Variable message trailers will appear at large rallies and twisty roads this summer with messages promoting motorcycle safety and training. WMSP will also again **mail postcards** in May to promote training and endorse-



ments as part of Motorcycle Awareness month. Finally, an **outreach survey** is planned for later in the year to gather information from Washington motorcyclists about their training and riding habits.



2015

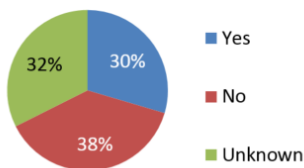
STUDENTS TRAINED

15,955

FATALITIES

72

2015 Fatalities & Training



2016

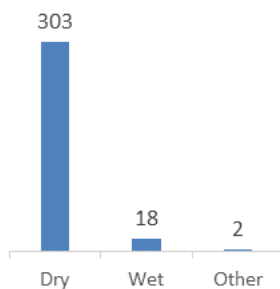
STUDENTS TRAINED

450

FATALITIES

6

2012-2016 FATALITIES Road Conditions



Need Additional Resources?

Check out the instructor resource page on the DOL website.

<http://www.dol.wa.gov/business/motorcycle/instructor-resources.html>

What do the Stats Tell Us?

2015 closed with 72 fatalities across Washington. Year-to-date 2016 we've learned of six fatalities compared to seven at this time in 2015. At first glance, we trained almost 16,000 people last year and fatalities are running about the same.

In looking closer, we know 30% of fatalities in 2015 were trained riders. Information does not tell us when the person trained or where they trained, but we can reasonably say they were trained in Washington. How do we respond when a third of the fatalities were people we trained?

We associate training with helping peo-

ple arrive home after every ride. But if trained riders are dying, then maybe we can make simple adjustments in the classroom to help save lives.

Take a look at road conditions for all 303 fatalities between 2012 and today. 94% were on dry pavement. How much time in the classroom is spent talking about the risks of moss, algae, rain, and ice compared to the risks of riding on dry roads?

Road surface may be a factor (dry roads = faster riding?) in motorcyclist fatalities. With that information, can we make adjustments in the classroom to ensure better outcomes for our students?

ALT of the Day - Passengers

When discussing passengers, here is a way to get students involved while learning and laughing.

Pick a volunteer to take you on your first (virtual) ride. The bike consists of lining two chairs up in a rider/passenger configuration. As the volunteer comes forward, start jumping up and down with excitement to let everyone know you're taking a ride for the first time.

As the passenger, follow the rider's every direction and exaggerate your actions to each instruction. Examples: When told to sit on the bike, sit on top of the backrest and put your feet on the seat.

When told where to sit, recline and put your feet up

on the rider. If the rider leans left, you lean right. Start tapping the rider on the shoulder without talking, to hopefully hear "what does that mean?" The class or rider will quickly point out all your mistakes.

In little time you can cover all the key elements without referring to the book, and along the way, get a few laughs.



Status on IP events scheduled in 2016

Due to current demand WMSP is working to arrange a second two-wheel IP in late summer. A west-side location and dates for the IP will be announced when finalized. Due to low demand, the 3W IP is pushed to a later date.



Training Aids

Remember your first class when becoming an instructor? Despite drinking from the firehose during the IP, you may have been nervous, confused, not sure if you should pre-set cones, wondered why you wanted to be a coach, or was otherwise unsure how to deliver the classroom material within a reasonable time period.

Okay, maybe that was just us. To help us and other new instructors, we are assembling a reading list that could be useful to all instructors new, old, and those instructors that may be set in



their ways. Think about one or two books that helped you develop as a coach (or motorcyclist) with techniques, concepts, or even maintenance. We also welcome suggestions on adult learning techniques, brain

based learning, or other reading material that applies to what we do.

We welcome your ideas, and ask you to provide a short summary of the book and briefly explain how it helped you develop. If that seems a bit daunting, simply provide your recommended book or article titles and we'll take it from there!

WMSP will compile the list and make it available online to all current instructors, and as you might guess, hand it out at future IPs.

The goal is to keep the list current and expand it as the community recommends new material. Send your fabulous ideas to motorcycle@dol.wa.gov.

The Speed of Assumption

I once bought a certain British 1050cc sport-touring bike after a long line of adventure bikes and found myself thinking a lot about- ahem - speed. More precisely, how do other riders and I gauge speed - and does that "gauge" change over time?

I asked this question because the new bike was fabulous, but one of the few issues I had were the tiny numbers on the speedometer dial. The size of those numbers made it a challenge for an accurate and quick scan of the speedometer (I am sure it had *NOTHING* to do with advancing age). Because of that, I continued my long-held technique of gauging speed not by numbers, but by feelings of comfort and safety, traffic speed, and environmental conditions. If I was cornering well with no scary pucker moments then I must be going an appropriate speed, right? Well actually...uhhhh...no.

Upon reflection I observed that in my first few years of riding my level of comfort was determined by my skill and equated to a "reasonable speed" – at least nothing that would involve, say, handcuffs.

With the new bike I found myself riding at what I assumed to be reasonable speed based on the "gauge" of my comfort level and skills – until I looked down at the actual gauge of the speedometer. The speedometer told me I was going *significantly* faster than a badged man or woman might approve, and I had to conclude it might impede my ability to successfully avoid a hazard.

So why the difference in my assumption of speed? What changed? Well the bike, yes – but I was beginning to notice this phenomenon prior to the new steed. I think it came down to the relationship between comfort level and increased skills. Quite simply, I'd like to think that I am a more skilled rider with each ride I take, book I read, or training I complete. Naturally as my skills and experience increased, so did my com-

fort level at higher and higher speeds. A year earlier I may have felt a pucker moment in a certain corner at 45 MPH, but now that same corner was a non-event at 60 MPH. In a sense that corner FELT the same at 60 as it did a year ago at 45. So if I am simply using my power of assumption to gauge my speed, I may be dangerously underestimating the risk. And what are the consequences of my choice to assume? Not so great to think about.

How do YOU as a rider determine your speed? How do YOU determine the relationship between YOUR skills, comfort, enjoyment, challenge, safety, and legality? What are YOU assuming? What has changed?

Choose well, ride well.

